

The Ecologist

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Vol. 17

1987

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MAJOR WORLD BANK PROJECTS:

Their impact on People, Society and the Environment

by Graham Searle

This study was commissioned by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) to serve as a background document for a proposed meeting between the World Bank and its principal critics.

Searle looks carefully at the probable human, social and ecological consequences of three World Bank projects, the **Narmada River Development Project** in India, the **Polonoroeste Project** in Brazil and the **Indonesian Transmigration Programme**, which were to be discussed at the meeting.

The material on which the study is based was largely obtained from the World Bank itself and the study was conducted with the full co-operation of the Bank's project staff.

Unfortunately, the meeting, originally scheduled for June 1986, was postponed to October 1986 and eventually cancelled while the IIED decided against publishing the study.

The Wadebridge Ecological Centre, however, decided that this document must be published because of its value to those concerned about the role played by the World Bank in determining the present course of Third World development.

Maps, tables and diagrams as well as references to the World Bank documents used to compile the study are included.

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The Wadebridge Ecological Centre

A Major Study in Three Volumes of: THE SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF LARGE DAMS

by Edward Goldsmith and Nicholas Hildyard

Volume 1: Overview 400pp

The Report considers such issues as the politics of damming, the problems of resettlement, the spread of waterborne diseases, flood control, water-logging and salinisation, management and maintenance and the effects of hydropower and irrigation projects on land and water use. It also considers the vernacular irrigation methods of five traditional societies.

We feel that this study is timely in that the main strategy of the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) for dealing with the growing food shortages in the arid areas of Africa and South Asia is *to increase the amount of agriculture land under irrigation*.

What they say about this report:

Goldsmith and Hildyard's 350-page blockbuster (exclusive of appendices and of the two supplementary volumes to follow) could be dramatic, especially if enough of the scientists, politicians, civil servants and international bureaucrats to whom it is addressed are convinced by the enormous mass of evidence that the best course of action would indeed be "to cut off funds from all large-scale water-development schemes that they may plan to finance, or are involved in financing, regardless of how advanced those schemes may be".

The Times, 16 Oct. 84

...Goldsmith and Hildyard have produced an unparalleled challenge to aid agencies, designers and their Third World clients to justify their investments in large dams, taking account of all the measures necessary to avoid similar disasters to those catalogued in this book. As such, it should be compulsory reading for all those involved in promoting, financing or designing large water resources projects.

Brian Appleton, World Water

Provocative and controversial as its recommendations may be, this catalogue of disaster must be countered, not dismissed, if its conclusion is to be challenged. The authors have collected a unique dossier of the effects of big water projects, and the picture they paint justifies the book's own description of "massive ecological destruction, of social upheaval, disease and impoverishment".

The New Civil Engineer

Although unwelcome, this book should be required reading for dam builders and ecologists evaluating such schemes.

Robert Goodland, World Bank

Volume 2: Case Studies

This volume includes thirty-one case studies, assessing the social and environmental effects of large dams and other water development schemes that have either already been built or that are on the drawing boards. The case studies selected are in—the U.S.A., Canada, Australia, Hungary, Norway, Tunisia, the Sudan, Egypt, Senegal, The Gambia, Ghana, Mozambique, Nigeria, Brazil, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Thailand, the Philippines, China and the U.S.S.R.

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This volume is in preparation and should be available later in 1988. It is a review of the useful literature (over 400 books and articles) on the different social and environmental effects of large dams and other water development schemes.

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